



**DARK
HORSE
COMICS**
ORCHID

3

\$3.50

ORCHID



TOM MORELLO

SCOTT HEPBURN

DAN JACKSON



SCRIPT BY
TOM MORELLO

ART BY
SCOTT HEPBURN

COLORS BY
DAN JACKSON

LETTERS BY
NATE PIEKOS OF BLAMBOT®

COVER BY
MASSIMO CARNEVALE

When the seas rose, genetic codes were smashed. Now, human settlements are ringed by a dense wilderness, from which ferocious new animal species prey on the helpless. The high ground belongs to the rich and powerful, who overlook swampland shantytowns from their fortresslike cities. Iron-fisted rule ensures order and allows the wealthy to harvest the poor as slaves. Welcome to the world of *Orchid*.

DESIGNER **DAVID NESTELLE** ASSISTANT EDITORS **JIM GIBBONS** AND **PATRICK THORPE** EDITORS **SIERRA HAHN** AND **DAVE LAND**
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She doesn't speak
to us. She doesn't
even look at us.



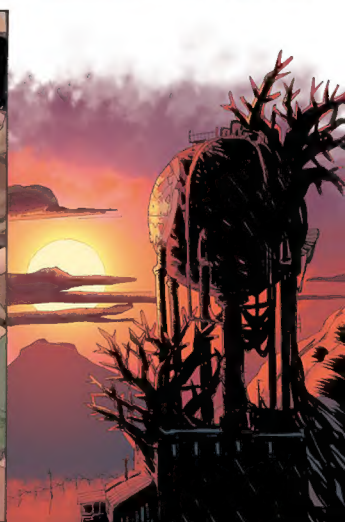
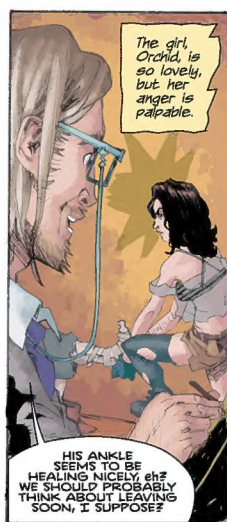
It's been eleven
days under her roof...



...and I'm still not
certain whether
we're her guests...



...under her
protection
and care...



For all her eccentricities, our host/captor has somehow rigged an ancient oil reserve tank to provide warmth and protect the grounds from the horrors lurking beyond the perimeter.



In this strange oasis in the Deep Wild, the days pass in relative peace.



But I've already overstayed. I must get to Fortress Penuei. Anzio's to be executed on the full moon and any hope we have rests in him.



But the old woman ignores every inquiry, stonewalls every question..

SOOO... HI. YES. HELLO? UM, PERHAPS I WAS UNCLEAR THE PREVIOUS TWO HUNDRED TIMES I ASKED BUT... WHAT'S YOUR NAME? WHERE ARE WE? AND WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED BACK THERE IN THE WOODS?



Shum shum shum o'ree... SOLDIER'S STILL AND ORDERLY, ARM TO ARM AND KNEE TO KNEE, WAITING FOR THE GREAT EVENT...



STANDS THE SILENT REGIMENT.

RADIIUS? HUM ALONG, DEAR...

WHAT DID HAPPEN BACK THERE IN THE WOODS?



We had no idea the boy had twisted his ankle and fallen behind.

HELP ME!!



By the time we discovered he was missing, there was nothing we could do.

YEHZU!!

YOU CAN'T GO BACK! IT'S CERTAIN DEATH!



And then the old woman appeared...



...and went straight for the beasts



We ran towards Yehzu's screams.

HELP!!!

WE'RE COMING!!



RHMBL RHMBL RHMBL

And then something most unexpected happened.



YELL! YELL!



And then there was silence...



It was pure carnage. Blood everywhere.



But miraculously the boy was unharmed.

SOBS! ORCHID!

IT'S OKAY. I'M RIGHT HERE.

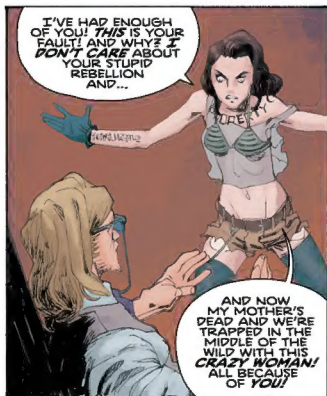


We couldn't believe our eyes: Apparently, the old woman had somehow felled the creature and driven the others off. Impossible.

She casually skinned the beast, ignoring our presence.









"GENERATIONS. FOR GENERATIONS, THEY SAID,
WE WERE ADrift ON THE DERELICT STEAMER,
SURVIVING AMONG A LOST AND BRUTAL PEOPLE.



"WHEN RAM'S PLAGUE
TOOK MY PARENTS, I
WAS DEFENSELESS
AGAINST THE RAPE MOBS.



"BUT *KIMATHI*,
ONE OF THE
ELDERS, SAVED
MY LIFE...



"...AND
RAISED
ME AS HIS
OWN.

"KIMATHI WAS WISE BEYOND
MEASURE AND LOVED HIS SON,
AND ME WITHOUT CONDITION."



REMEMBER, CHILDREN,
EVIL ENTERS LIKE A SPLINTER
AND SPREADS LIKE AN OAK
TREE. IN THE MOMENT OF
DECISION, WILL YOU PUT YOUR
CAUSE BEFORE YOUR LIFE, OR
YOUR LIFE BEFORE YOUR CAUSE?
NO ONE CAN CHOOSE FOR
YOU. ENOUGH FOR TODAY...

...OPAL: THERE IS A LITTLE SOUP
LEFT. I WILL EAT TOMORROW.



"KIMATHI'S SON, HIS NAME...
WAS *CHINA*. AND EVEN AS
A BOY, HE WAS CLEVER,
STRONG, AND RIGHTEOUS.

"CHINA AND
I BECAME
INSEPARABLE.



"AND AS THE YEARS PASSED, WE CARVED
MOMENTS OF HAPPINESS OUT OF
THE HELLISH LIFE ABOARD THE BARGE.

"UNTIL ONE DAY, THE
TIDES PULLED US
TOWARD AN
UNEXPECTED SIGHT...



"...LAND.

"THE PARADISE OF DRY LAND
HAD ONLY BEEN A FAIRY TALE.
AS WE WADED TO SHORE, ALL
WERE *THRILLED* TO SET FOOT
ON SOLID GROUND FOR THE
FIRST TIME.

"BUT WE WERE
NOT ALONE...

"WE WERE
TAKEN BY
SURPRISE
OF COURSE.

"AND THESE CREATURES
DID NOT APPEAR IN
THE FAIRY TALES.

"IT WAS ONLY
THROUGH
KIMATHI'S QUICK
THINKING... WE WERE
SAFE. BUT THAT DAY...
AFTER ALL WE'D BEEN
THROUGH... I LOST...
THAT DAY WE, UMM...
WE... *SIGH*... ALMOST
LOST OUR LIVES.

"BUT THE HUNT WENT
ON AND ON. WE
THOUGHT... WE WERE
SAFE. BUT THAT DAY...
AFTER ALL WE'D BEEN
THROUGH... I LOST...
THAT DAY WE, UMM...
WE... *SIGH*... ALMOST
LOST OUR LIVES.



"AS THE DAYS PASSED,
WE LIVED LIKE SHADOWS
AT THE EDGE OF THE WILD.



"AND WE TOOK
FOOD WHERE WE
COULD FIND IT.



"WE SURVIVED
BECAUSE WE HAD
EACH OTHER. WE
EXISTED FOR
EACH OTHER.



"BUT OVER
TIME, KIMATHI
GREW...UNWELL.



"IT...IT WAS MORE
THAN OLD AGE
THAT TOOK ITS
TOLL ON HIM.



"AND THEN OUR
WORLD CAME
UNDONE."

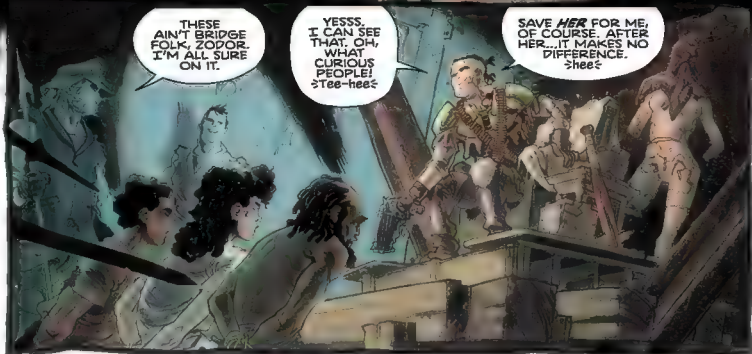
GARRH!
STAY RIGHT
THERE, OLD
MAN!!

ZODOR
WILL BE PLEASED
WITH THIS NICE
FIND!

HA HA
HA HA
HA HA



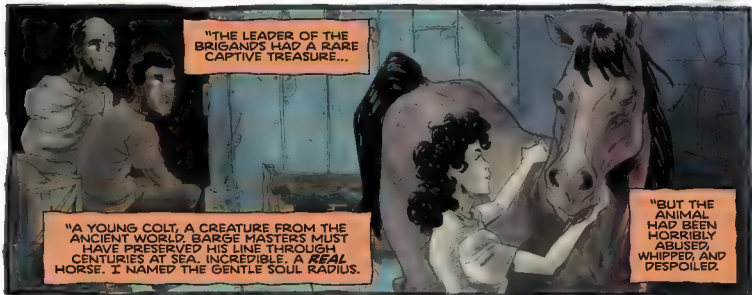
"A CRUEL BAND OF SCAVENGERS,
THUGS OF A PETTY WARLORD,
INTRODUCED US TO 'CIVILIZATION!'"



THESE
AIN'T BRIDGE
FOLK, ZODOR.
I'M ALL SURE
ON IT.

YESSS.
I CAN SEE
THAT. OH,
WHAT
CURIOUS
PEOPLE!
Stee-hee

SAVE *HER* FOR ME,
OF COURSE. AFTER
HER...IT MAKES NO
DIFFERENCE.
Stee



"THE LEADER OF THE
BRIGANDS HAD A RARE
CAPTIVE TREASURE..."

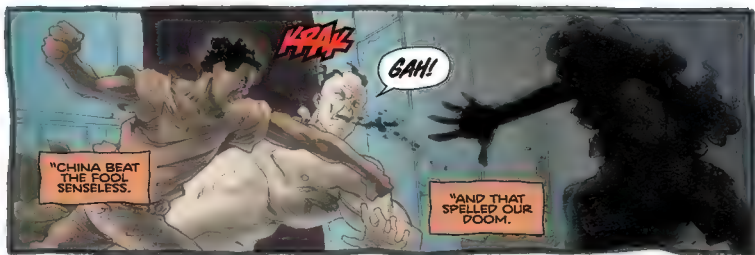
"A YOUNG COLT, A CREATURE FROM THE
ANCIENT WORLD. BARGE MASTERS MUST
HAVE PRESERVED HIS LINE THROUGH
CENTURIES AT SEA. INCREDIBLE. A *REAL*
HORSE. I NAMED THE GENTLE SOUL RADIUS.

"BUT THE
ANIMAL
HAD BEEN
HORRIBLY
ABUSED,
WHIPPED, AND
DESPOILED.



"AND I WAS
TO BE NEXT..."

NOW,
Stee-hee
LET'S PLAY,
PRETTY.



"CHINA BEAT
THE FOOL
SENSELESS."

GAH!

"AND THAT
SPELLED OUR
DOOM."



"THE
BRIGAND
LEADER
BROUGHT
FORTH
A STRANGE
MASK; A
PATCH-WORK
HOOD."

YOU DARE DEFY
ME? HA-HA
REALLY? DO
YOU??

DO IT!
DO IT!

PLEASE,
ZODOR,
USE IT ON
THEM!



THEN
YOU'LL
ALL DIE!
HAH!
HA!

Uh?



"THE ACCURSED THING
TORE MY DEAR KIMATHI TO
PIECES...FROM THE INSIDE."

ARGH!

"THESE SCAVENGERS
MUST HAVE
STUMBLED UPON
THIS ANCIENT
TORTURE DEVICE,
USING IT FOR THEIR
CRUEL PLEASURE."



"BUT WHEN THEY
SLIPPED THE HOOD
OVER CHINA'S HEAD..."



Huh?



"THE WORLD OF THE
BRIDGE PEOPLE
BEGAN TO CHANGE.

"WHEREVER THE INNOCENT
WERE THREATENED..."

TOMO
WOLFE DEMANDS
HIS TAXES! IT'S
SIMPLE, GREENFOOT
SCUM...IF YOU DON'T
PAY, YOU DIE!



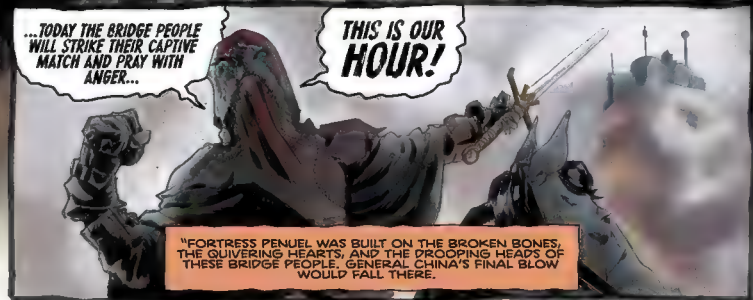
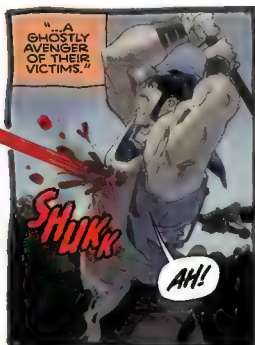
"...CHINA
WAS THERE.



"THE SLAVE
TRADERS LEARNED
TO FEAR HIS NAME..."

"...AND THE
SOLDIERS OF
TOMO WOLFE
BELIEVED HE
WAS NOT
HUMAN, BUT
A GRIM
APPARITION..."





"WE STOOD SOLIDLY
TOGETHER. THOUSANDS
MARCHED LIKE ONE
GREAT BODY.

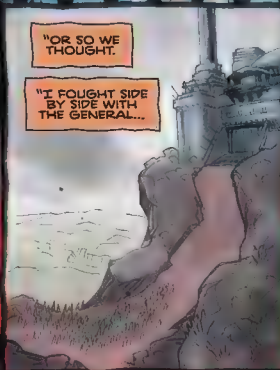
"WHATEVER CHINA AND
I HAD BETWEEN US WAS
LOST IN THE WIND OF
BATTLE. MY *GREAT LOVE*
WAS NOW A SPIRIT OF
LIGHTNING AND ANGER.



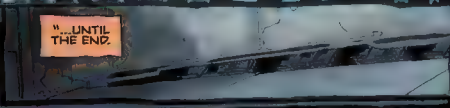
"AND OUR RULERS
WERE AFRAID OF
THE MARROW IN
THEIR OWN BONES.

"OR SO WE
THOUGHT.

"I FOUGHT SIDE
BY SIDE WITH
THE GENERAL...



"...UNTIL
THE END.



"OUR SIDE
HAD TRUTH,
RIGHTEOUSNESS...
AND FOR A TIME,
LOYALTY. TOMO
WOLFE HAD
TEN THOUSAND
MURDEROUS
MACHINES.
IT WAS A
MASSACRE."

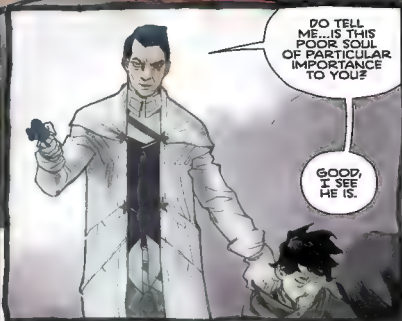


URGH!

HGGG!

AAGH!







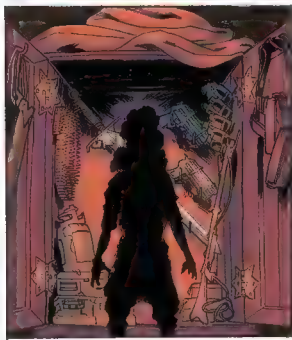
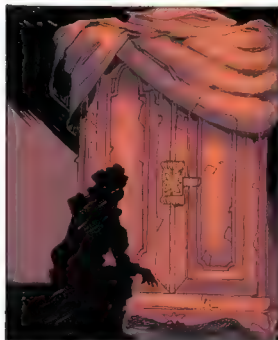
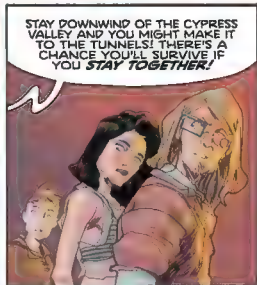
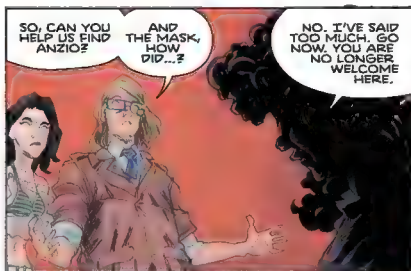


"TOMO
WOLFE
LIED."

"GENERAL CHINA
DIED THAT DAY.
ANONYMOUS AND
DISGRACED...JUST
ANOTHER NAMELESS
HUSTY AMONG THE
THOUSANDS. HE
BETRAYED HIMSELF--
HE BETRAYED ALL
OF US. THE UPRISING
WAS FINISHED."

"TO LOSE THE BATTLE, TO
LOSE THE WAR, WAS A
TERRIBLE THING. BUT TO
LOSE YOURSELF...IF YOU
REALLY LOSE YOURSELF...
YOU ARE GONE FOREVER."

"I FLED INTO THE WILD
WITH RADIUS. I'LL SPEND
THE REST OF MY LIFE HERE,
IN ISOLATION AND SHAME--
EACH DAY A PENANCE FOR
ALL THOSE LIVES WASTED
WITH NOTHING GAINED."







THE SHADOW REBEL READER

E-MAIL US AT: ORCHID@DARKHORSE.COM

WRITE TO US AT: THE SHADOW REBEL READER

C/O DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 SE MAIN STREET, MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

To learn more about the world of *Orchid* and be entered to win exclusive prizes, text **ORCHID to 738674**. You don't have to buy a thing; we're just eager to explore innovative ways of bringing readers closer to the stories by providing unique content, news, and prizes.

Even though this letter column is running in the *Orchid* #3 issue, on sale in December, we're writing this column in October—the release month of *Orchid* #1, which was launched with much fanfare at New York Comic Con. There, Tom and Scott were on hand to meet their first fans and sign issue #1, and Tom even performed for Comic Con attendees. I've also just found out that issue #1 sold out, which is a thrilling and encouraging way to launch a new comics series. Please continue to write in and we'll run your letters here. *Orchid*'s world is about to get more interesting.

Orchid,

So, I'm in the LCS yesterday (Rock Bottom Comics, Fayetteville, AR!) and *Orchid* #1 caught my eye. I'd never heard of it so I picked it up and noticed the name on the bottom. Tom Morello... hmmm... "Calm Like a Bomb" Tom? No way! So yeah, I gave it a shot. It's not every day that one of your favorite musicians puts out a

comic. That aside, I really liked it. It's quite a world you've thrown us into. I'm interested in seeing more of it. Count me in!

Still Ragin',

T. Sebastian Essex

Ozark Mountain Wilderness

Hello,

I'm writing to let you know that I find *Orchid* really interesting and a fresh breather from the glut of superhero comics on the market. Really love the fact that you guys make each issue available digitally the same day as print. More publishers need to do that. Keep up the good work!

Mushfiqur Rahman

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Thank you for your letters and feedback. Hopefully, you enjoyed the free music that Tom composed specially as a soundtrack for issue #2, entitled "The Deluge." Now, please check out the free music from Tom for this issue.

SMH
editor



Enter the scimitar-wielding beast master Don Barrabas!
Orchid #4 on sale January 11, 2012

EACH ISSUE WILL FEATURE NEW MUSIC BY TOM MORELLO.

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